555 554 596 village almost as much as himself. The wealth usually accumulated by an official during his career also materially enhanced the village and clan as well as the family. For these reasons, reflected glory accrued to the kin of an illustrious scholar or official for generations after his death.

C. Political Role

577 596 642 To a remarkable extent, the Chinese imperial system operated by moral suasion with a minimum use of force and without a developed, codified system of law. This achievement was made possible through the state's utilization of the family as a training ground for loyalty to the state and the virtues prized by it as part of the machinery of government. The root virtue of filial piety was extolled above all others in the Confucian system. It denoted not only the obedience and devotion of the son to his father but of the younger to the elder, and of the subject to the ruler.

●618 Two types of organizations built on the foundation of the family were utilized by the state in maintaing peace and uniformity throughout the empire. One was the clan, or tsu. It bound together families with a common ancestor to promote their security and advancement. Relying for strength on the maximizing and formalizing of kinship ties, the tsu reinforced the authority of the family head and the values he imparted to the younger generation. The tsu settled disputes between families, conducted ancestor rites for

618 any member of a family whose line died out, provided help and protection in times of trouble for the lower class members, and safeguarded the social and economic position of the well-to-do. Where the tsu was strong, it governed the village with little interference from the central government, except in matters of high crime and taxes. The advantages to the Confucian state of the tsu were deemed sufficient to compensate for its encroachment on the state's jurisdiction.[5]

In gathering together all the members of the tsu for the yearly rites honoring its ancestors, this social institution served to bring the poor and uncultured into contact with, and under the influence of, the well-off and educated gentry. Its more accomplished members headed the clan and represented the closest approximation to the ideal of the "superior man" (chün-tsu). Meetings with such men, whose behavior was patterned by leisure and education beyond the means of the great majority of society, provided the lower classes with living models for emulation and opportunities to impress the young men and women with the proper attitude of respect toward their social superiors.

631 Another institution based on the family utilized by the state was the pao-chia system.

---

5. On the clan, see Hu Hsien-chin, The Descent Group in China and Its Functions (Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology, No. 10), New York, The Viking Fund, Inc., 1948.